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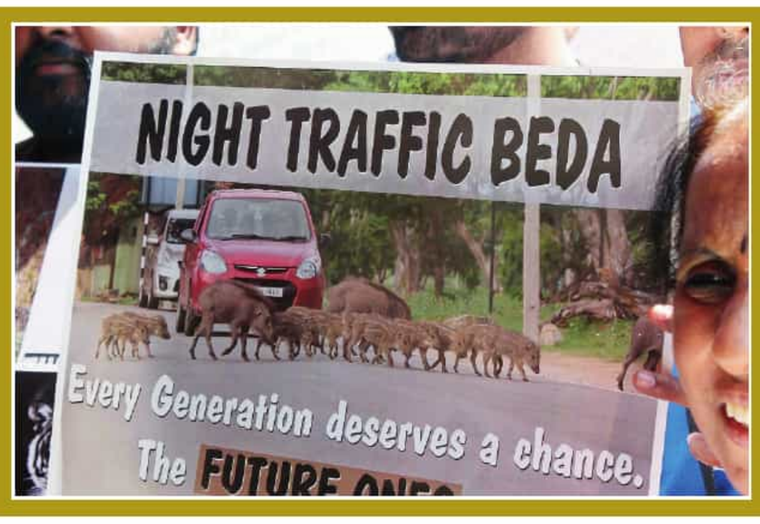
Bangalore Mirror

TEMP Max 33 | Min 23 | Humidity 61% Light rain Sensex 78,553 | Nifty 23,851 | Gold 95,239 | Silver 95,001 | Dollar 85.39 | Euro 97.11 | GBP 113.24

PROOF IS IN THE POST

Traffic police use location-based social media monitoring to identify miscreants posting wheeling videos and other evidence online

PAGE 5



CREATURES OF THE NIGHT

All you need to know about the night traffic ban at roads cutting through Bandipur and why it is back in the news again

PAGE 7

10 POCSO cases on an average daily is what 2025 has recorded — activists say while growing awareness has increased reportage of cases, without follow-through, conviction rates remain dismal

THE KIDS ARE NOT ALRIGHT

Of 216 cases charge-sheeted in 2024, only 15 disposed of so far

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In a worrying trend, Karnataka reported a staggering 4,019 cases under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act in 2024 — the highest in the past four years. And shockingly in the first two months of 2025, an average of 10 POCSO cases were reported daily.

In 2024, police registered 8,233 cases related to crimes against children, marking a rise from 7,854 cases in 2023. Of these, 4,003 were filed under the POCSO Act, indicating a 38.89% increase since 2021, when 2,882 cases were recorded.

About the increase in cases child rights activist Vasudev Sharma said, "The increasing number of cases indicates growing awareness about reporting cases, but the punishment for criminals remains low. Most cases of child sexual abuse happen within the family or involve someone known to the victim.

The severity of such offences demands immediate FIR registration." He said, people now understand the gravity of such offences highlighting the growing seriousness with which cases of POCSO are now being addressed. "In a densely populated country like India, the crime rate tends to rise, especially in crowded settings where the victim may lack alternative outlets or support systems leading the accused to commit offences within their immediate circle," he added.

The number of POCSO cases has consistently grown over the years — from 2,165 in 2020 to 2,884 in 2021, 3,209 in 2022,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 »

"Even when someone gathers the courage to act against the perpetrator, indifferent attitudes and flawed police investigations often lead to no meaningful outcome

— Rupa Hassan, child rights activist

The fence eaters

Locals cut through B'luru-Mysuru Expressway fence to create short-cuts, end up putting lives at risk

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The newly constructed Bengaluru-Mysuru Expressway, designed to reduce travel time between the two cities, is facing unexpected challenges. Locals have started cutting through the highway's fencing, creating shortcuts and crossing over from one side to another. This illegal act is causing significant safety concerns for both pedestrians and motorists.

The newly built expressway, which has been a major infrastructure project, has ended up becoming a spot for such unauthorised crossings. People are breaking the fences installed on either side of the road to cross over to the other side.

Challenges for road safety

To facilitate smoother movement for commuters, the highway authority has constructed several flyovers and junctions, making it easier for people to cross at designated points. However, these flyovers require people to walk longer distances, leading locals to resort to cutting fences

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 »

THINGS TO DO

01 Art odyssey

National Gallery of Modern Art is inaugurating an in-house curated exhibition 'Journeying the life experience through art: Amitabh Sengupta's Odyssey of six decades'. **Where: National Gallery of Modern Art, Palace Road; When: April 25, 5 pm**

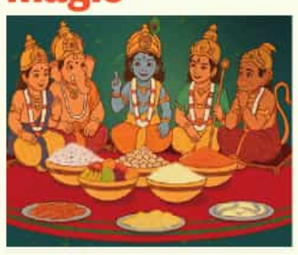
02 Soulful music

HSBC is presenting a concert featuring legendary singer Hariharan and globally renowned flute virtuoso Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia. **Where: Courtyard, Phoenix Market city; When: May 4, 7 pm**

03 Artistic expression

The eighth edition of the Whitefield Art Collective (WAC) will be taking place with the theme "Future is Now". This year's edition promises to be an immersive celebration of art, featuring over 100 installations. **Where: VR Bengaluru, Whitefield Main Road; When: March 27 to April 28**

04 Theatrical magic



Svasti Art Foundation is presenting 'When Gods Party…!', a dance theatre production featuring a playful and lighthearted celebration of gods. **Where: ADA Rangamandira, JC Road; When: April 25, 6.15 pm**

05 Divine art

Chiguru Nrithyalaya is presenting a Bharatanatyam performance to bring to life the divine essence and multifaceted nature of Lord Ayyappa. **Where: Ravindra Kalakshetra, Sampangi Rama Nagar; When: April 27, 6 pm**

Delayed possession costs builder ₹2.56 cr

K-RERA rejects multiple delay claims, directs builder to not only pay compensation with interest but also to take over and settle remaining housing loan in buyer's name

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In a significant verdict offering hope to homebuyers caught in long-standing property disputes, the Karnataka Real Estate Regulatory Authority (K-RERA) has ordered a reputed builder to pay Rs 2.56 crore as compensation to a buyer who has been paying Equated Monthly Instalment (EMIs) for nearly a decade without receiving possession of his flat.

The ruling came as a major relief for Ananth Ramachandran, a resident of Cox Town, who booked a flat under the pre-EMI scheme in the 'Mantri Webcity' project in March 2014. He paid Rs 15 lakh upfront and availed a Rs 65 lakh loan from a bank. As part of a tripartite agreement signed between the builder, buyer, and the bank, the builder was supposed to repay all pre-EMIs until March 31, 2017, by when the flat was to be handed over.

However, the builder neither delivered the flat by the stipulated date nor continued paying the pre-EMIs as promised. This left the buyer burdened with EMI payments without having possession of the property.

K-RERA rules in homebuyer's favour

With no home in hand and mounting financial stress, Ramachandran approached K-RERA seeking justice. The K-RERA bench, led by Member GR Reddy, after detailed examination of the case, ruled in favor of the homebuyer. The authority directed the builder, Mantri Developers, to not only pay Rs 2.56 crore (including interest) as compensation but also take over and settle the remaining housing loan in the buyer's name.

PICTURE FOR REPRESENTATION ONLY

Landmark judgment sends a strong message to erring developers about the consequences of delaying possession and failing to honour contractual obligations

Multiple reasons for delay cited

The builder had earlier appealed against RERA's initial order in the High Court and managed to secure a stay in June 2024. However, the homebuyer pursued the case further at the K-RERA tribunal, which has now reaffirmed the builder's accountability under Section 18 of the RERA Act (2016). In its defence, the builder cited multiple reasons for the delay, including legal and license issues, prolonged rains and floods at the construction site, demonetisation, introduction of GST, shortage of skilled labour, hike in construction material costs, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ruling strengthens consumer protection

However, the authority dismissed all these justifications. It pointed out that the project deadline was March 2017, while the pandemic began in 2020, making the COVID excuse irrelevant. It also rejected other reasons as inadequate and not aligned with the commitment made in the agreement. Sources pointed out that this landmark judgment not only reaffirms K-RERA's commitment to protecting homebuyers, but also sends a strong message to erring developers about the consequences of delaying possession and failing to honour contractual obligations. Sources also said that this verdict is expected to set a precedent for similar cases and restore faith amongst consumers who often feel helpless against powerful real estate companies.

The builder cited multiple reasons for the delay, including legal and license issues, prolonged rains and floods at the construction site, demonetisation, introduction of GST, shortage of skilled labour and the COVID-19 pandemic

BMTC tightens vigil to track revenue

In a move to curb revenue leakage, the Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) has directed all unit managers to identify and submit a list of five conductors from each unit who are suspected of high income leakage. The directive was issued by BMTC's Chief Security and Vigilance Officer, who has decided to intensify monitoring of conductors' duties. The decision follows internal findings that BMTC operates around 18 lakh trips monthly, but only 1.1% of these trips are currently audited by the corporation's vigilance team. "To address this gap, BMTC will now focus on conductors suspected of higher revenue leakage. Each unit has been instructed to send a monthly list of five such conductors, whose performance will be closely monitored," a BMTC official said. The official highlighted that the vigilance team will track their trips to detect and prevent any misuse or misreporting of revenue. "This initiative is part of BMTC's broader efforts to plug financial leaks and improve accountability across its operations," the official said. **— BMB**

Namma metro records third-highest daily ridership

Despite a recent hike in fares, Namma Metro has witnessed a strong rebound in passenger numbers, reaching 9.08 lakh riders on April 17, the third-highest single-day ridership ever. This marks a notable comeback from the dip in numbers that followed the fare increase in February. According to officials, the resurgence in ridership is attributed to unavoidable factors such as severe summer heat, heavy traffic congestion, and the time-saving benefits of metro travel. Data shows that on April 17 alone, 9,08,153 commuters used the metro, with the Purple Line from Whitefield to Challaghatta accounting for 4,35,516 riders, and the Green Line from Madavara to Silk Institute carrying 2,85,240 passengers.

Despite high ridership numbers, several commuters have expressed displeasure on social media, urging authorities to first reduce fares and improve basic facilities before celebrating records

"This recovery is significant considering the decline in ridership after the February fare hike, when many regular commuters had temporarily turned to alternative modes of transport such as bikes and cars, leading to an increase in city traffic," a Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) official said. Officials also noted that in March, summer conditions pushed 2.24 crore passengers to opt for metro travel, showing how climate and comfort factor heavily into commuter preferences. Earlier, the highest-ever ridership was recorded on December 6, 2024, at 9.20 lakh, followed closely by 9.17 lakh on August 14, 2024. The April 17 figure now stands as the third-highest single-day record in the metro's history.

Ridership had been consistently high in December 2024 and January 2025, with daily averages nearing 9 lakh and peaking above 10 lakh on Mondays and Fridays. However, February's fare revision resulted in a steep drop, with March numbers indicating a shortfall of over 1 lakh daily commuters, many of whom returned to road transport, worsening traffic congestion. Despite the high numbers, several commuters have expressed displeasure on social media, urging authorities to first reduce fares and improve basic facilities before celebrating records. **— BMB**

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Year-end deadline accelerates land document digitisation

Officials are directed to meet their average scanning targets by month-end, with consequences such as issuance of notices and salary deductions in case of non-compliance

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The Revenue Department is accelerating its flagship 'Bhu-Suraksha Project', which aims to digitise and preserve land-related documents, including those from land revenue, survey, and registration departments. As part of this mission, the department has already completed scanning 15.5 crore pages of tahsildar office records.

With a target of completing the scanning and digitisation of around 90 crore additional pages by the end of the year, the department has issued notices to 192 tahsildars for failing to maintain the expected pace. These officials have now been directed to meet their daily average scanning targets by the end of the month. "Once scanned, the documents will undergo scrutiny and approval by Shirastedars (record officers), after which they will be uploaded with digital signatures. The department plans to launch a service within two months to allow citizens to access these digital documents online," said a Revenue Department official. According to Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda, only Category A (permanent) and Category B (to be preserved for 30 years) records are being scanned and digitised under this initiative to ensure long-term archival and prevent damage or loss of critical land documents. Revenue Department Commissioner Pommala Sunil Kumar said that the department is digitising valuable land records to make them accessible online, which will help prevent fraud, ensure instant access for future generations, and support legal and official requirements.

> **"The department plans to launch a service within two months to allow citizens to access these digital documents online**
> – Revenue Department official

Only Category A (permanent) and Category B (to be preserved for 30 years) records are being digitised under the initiative to ensure long-term archival and prevent damage or loss of critical land documents

Benefits of digitisation

- Long-term preservation of land documents
- Prevention of loss or destruction of records
- Curbing creation of fake documents
- Instant access to generational records
- Support for court and official proceedings

Pilot implementation and progress

The scanning project began in February 2024 in 31 taluks, one from each district, as a pilot. Amongst them, 11 taluks, including Naragunda, Chincholi, and Molakalmuru, have completed the process. However, Bengaluru Urban is trailing, ranked 29th out of 31 in terms of progress, with only 16.91 lakh pages scanned.

Accountability measures in place

To push for faster implementation, the department has threatened to deduct the salaries of officers and data entry operators responsible for delays. A recent review revealed that 36 tahsildars were scanning fewer than 1,000 pages a day, prompting issuance of show-cause notices. "Currently, the department receives 400–500 requests monthly for various scanned records. The new digital distribution platform is expected to make access easier, quicker, and more transparent for the public," an official said.

BBMP earns praise for protecting trees

Following provision of percolation pits for few trees, residents urge authorities ensure same for all trees in area

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Volunteers of KR Puram Rising and environmentalists have lauded the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) Forest Department and the engineering department for their efforts in ensuring adequate space around trees, allowing for percolation of rainwater. Previously, residents were alarmed to find workers concreting the footpath around trees without leaving space for rainwater percolation. They urged authorities to take action against the contractor for failing to preserve the necessary space and criticised the BBMP ward engineer for inadequate supervision of the footpath's development.

Bangalore Mirror published the story 'They paved paradise' on April 17, narrating how trees, carefully nurtured by citizens, were smothered in concrete as BBMP contractors neglected to leave space for rainwater percolation. The residents and various environmentalists were up in arms against the BBMP ward engineer for not supervising and inspecting the ongoing development of the footpath along the service road between KR Puram Railway Station and the ITI Limited.

Presently, environmentalists and volunteers of KR Puram Rising wish to express their gratitude to BBMP authorities for ensuring ample space around trees. "I am very happy to see space left around the trees for the percolation of rainwater," said Balaji Raghotham, an environmentalist.

Trees with percolation pits on the footpath near KR Puram

City | BangaloreMirror
They paved paradise...
Trees nurtured by citizens slathered with concrete as BBMP's contractors forget to leave space for rainwater percolation

BM reported about the issue on April 17, narrating how the area was being concretised, with no space for rainwater percolation around trees

Thanking the BBMP authorities for taking the necessary measures to save the trees on the footpath, M Sreeram, an environmentalist, expressed his wish for BBMP authorities to prioritise the development of footpaths in and around KR Puram to safeguard and nurture saplings as they grow into trees. "I want the BBMP authorities to develop the footpath on both sides of the road (Vinayaka Temple Road) to save around 200 well-grown saplings," he said.

N Nagesh, President of KR Puram Auto Drivers' Association, pointed out that the BBMP contractor has made provisions for percolation of rainwater around 20 trees on the footpath. "I want the BBMP contractor to ensure space around the remaining 20 trees," he said.

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Garbage menace

Austin Town

Garbage burning near Corporation Community Hall, Austin Town, causes inconvenience.

Road disruption

Doddanekkundi

Cabs park illegally and drive against traffic on Doddanekkundi service road, causing traffic problems.

Faulty fix

Ashok Nagar

The slabs near Adarsh Opus are broken again, despite being replaced just two months ago.

Ex-K'taka DGP Om Prakash found murdered at home

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Former Karnataka Director General of Police (DGP) Om Prakash was found murdered under suspicious circumstances at his residence in HSR Layout on Sunday afternoon. The 68-year-old retired IPS officer was discovered in a pool of blood with multiple stab wounds, pointing strongly to a violent attack.

According to officials, police were alerted via an emergency 112 call. A Hoysala patrol vehicle was immediately dispatched and reached the scene. Upon arrival, officers found Om Prakash with multiple stab injuries, The probe revealed that he was stabbed 8 to 10 times on his chest, stomach and hands, which led to significant blood loss, indicating the likely use of a sharp weapon in the attack.

The Hoysala team rushed him to the nearest hospital, where he was declared 'brought dead'. Following this, police contacted his family and began formal procedures. His son has filed a complaint, based on which an FIR will be registered.

Additional Commissioner of Police (West), Vikash Kumar, stated, "Initial information suggests the matter might be internal in nature. A sharp weapon appears to have been used, and the extent of blood loss led to the fatality. A detailed investigation will commence once the FIR is registered."

Om Prakash, 1981 IPS officer from Bihar, served as DGP in 2015

Police responded to an emergency 112 call and found Om Prakash with 8-10 stab wounds. The injuries, including stabs to his chest, stomach, hands, led to severe blood loss

It is alleged that at the time of the incident, Om Prakash's wife, Pallavi, was reportedly present at the residence. She had initially called a friend to inform her about the situation, before alerting the police, however, it is not confirmed yet by the officials. The police had taken Pallavi and her daughter into custody for questioning, and Pallavi is currently being treated as the prime suspect in the case. It is alleged that a domestic row over property between DGP Omprakash and his wife Pallavi led to the murder, resulting in multiple stabs, which led to the death.

Om Prakash, a 1981 batch IPS officer, hailed from Champaran in Bihar and held a Master's degree in Geology. He was appointed the Director General of Police on March 1, 2015, and retired after an illustrious career. Post-retirement, he had settled in HSR Layout with his wife and daughter.

The body has been sent for autopsy, and senior police officials have visited the crime scene. As the investigation progresses, authorities expect more details to emerge in the coming days.

Cops use reels to bust wheelie offenders

Using geotagged social media reels, Bengaluru Traffic Police booked 482 wheelie cases, seized 473 vehicles, and arrested 386 offenders in just three months

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With an increasing number of youngsters performing dangerous wheelies to create content for social media reels, the Bengaluru City Traffic Police have adopted an "Intelligent Policing" strategy, which uses location-based social media monitoring to swiftly identify miscreants posting wheeling videos and other evidence online. This tech-enabled approach has significantly enhanced the department's digital presence and surveillance capabilities, enabling swift identification and action against offenders.

By actively monitoring social media platforms, the police are now able to scan through videos and photos uploaded by the miscreants themselves or flagged by alert citizens. This digital watch has empowered a specialised team to track down offenders efficiently and initiate legal action.

As a result, the first quarter of 2025 has already seen a record spike in cases booked and vehicles seized, a remarkable jump compared to previous years. Authorities state that this surge is a direct outcome of this innovative strategy, blending public vigilance with real-time online monitoring to curb the rising trend of stunt riding on city roads.

Shiva Prakash Devaraju, DCP Traffic (South), also the Nodal Officer for Anti-Wheeling crackdown, explained how a clear pattern emerged through the monitoring of social media reels. "When we watch these reels repeatedly, the platform's algorithm starts recommending similar content from different users in the same area. If it detects an interest in wheeling, it pushes more such videos".

To tackle this, dedicated teams were formed at each police station. Constables were assigned to track and monitor reels based on their geotags and content. By analysing these videos, police were able to identify individuals, trace their locations, and book cases accordingly. This strategy led to a large number of arrests, all within the first three months of this year.

Constables tracked reels, identified suspects,and made arrests early this year

"For every reel we identify, we track the location, identify the rider, and take action. Many of these youngsters perform wheelies just to grab attention, gain followers, and even make money from their social media content," DCP Devaraju further added.

Wheeling crackdown

The city has seen remarkable results from the ongoing wheeling crackdown, thanks to the adoption of the intelligent policing strategy. In 2022, the division booked 283 cases and seized 186 vehicles related to wheeling activities. In 2023, there was a slight dip in cases booked, down to 219, though vehicle seizures rose to 214. The real shift came in 2024 when intensified enforcement measures led to 532 cases being booked and 520 vehicles seized. That year also saw the arrest of 456 individuals, the suspension of 146 driving licenses, and 246 vehicle registration certificates sent for suspension.

In just the first three months of 2025, the city traffic police recorded a total of 482 cases booked during the year. A total of 473 vehicles involved in such offences were seized, and 386 individuals were arrested. The drive also extended to juvenile offenders, with action taken against 100 minors and 71 guardians held accountable, following 121 minors and 79 guardians booked in 2024. As part of the crackdown, 61 driving licences were sent for suspension, while 276 vehicle registration certificates (RCs) were submitted for suspension.

Major hotspots

The traffic police have also identified several high-risk areas where wheeling incidents are frequently recorded. These include major stretches such as Airport Road, Kengeri Road near NICE Road, the NICE Road itself, Hosur Road, Electronic City Flyover, Double Decker Flyover, KR Puram Road, and various stretches in Shivajinagar, especially during nighttime. A noticeable pattern of stunt riding has been observed across these hotspots.

Four arrested for attacking cops

A gang of four youths, including a juvenile, has been arrested by the Ramanagar police for allegedly assaulting two police constables and robbing their motorcycle. The incident occurred when the officers went to serve them a notice for performing dangerous stunts, "wheeling" on a public road.

According to the complaint filed by Constables Basavaraj and Jayakumar, the accused not only obstructed them from performing their duty but also physically attacked them during a heated confrontation, before fleeing with their motorbike.

The arrested have been identified as Yusuf Khan, Firoz Khan, and Sameer Khan, all working as construction workers. The fourth accused is a minor who has been referred to the Child Welfare Committee (CWC) for further proceedings. The others were produced before a local court and remanded to judicial custody.

Police said the group had recently posted a video of themselves performing wheelies on the Mysuru–Bengaluru highway near Kengal in Channapatna, which went viral on social media. Taking suo motu notice of the incident, police tracked the accused and sent officers to serve them a legal notice, which led to the assault and robbery.

A case has been registered under charges of assaulting public servants on duty and robbery, and further investigation is underway. **–BMB**

Teen strangles father over dispute

The Vivek Nagar police have booked a murder case against a 19-year-old student, who, along with his mother, allegedly killed his father over domestic disputes.

The accused, Sameer, and his mother Tabassum, 36, have been detained for questioning after the death of Islam Arab, a retired army personnel who had served until 2017.

Preliminary investigation revealed that Sameer was upset with his father for being overly strict and frequently reprimanding him for coming home late and socialising with friends. Fed up with the restrictions, the mother-son duo allegedly hatched a plan to eliminate him.

According to police, they laced his dinner with sedatives, and once Islam fell asleep, Sameer attempted to strangle him. Islam resisted, leading to a scuffle, but Sameer eventually overpowered him and strangled him to death.

The accused initially misled police by claiming that a gang had barged in and murdered his father after a fight. However, CCTV footage showed no outsiders entering the house, and signs of struggle raised suspicion.

Upon detailed questioning, Sameer confessed to the crime, police said. Further investigation is underway. **–BMB**

Cops on footpath duty or just taking pavers?

Police seen taking pavers from footpath; raises questions over misuse, accountability

Y Maheswara Reddy
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TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

Police are meant to safeguard public property and prevent theft. But what happens when officers themselves are caught loading a police truck with hundreds of concrete pavers from a public footpath?

Yes, the incident has drawn attention from the public, particularly pedestrians who use the footpath regularly. It happened on Friday morning on KG Road in front of Kandaya Bhavan, where the Karnataka State Administrative Tribunal is also situated. Around eight police constables in mufti were found busy loading the police truck with concrete pavers kept on the footpath.

The concrete pavers were removed and kept on the footpath by the contractor, who took up construction of a utility duct to lay cables. The concrete pavers are in good condition and can be used to develop walkways in the city by the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP). It is a known fact that many footpaths in the city are in a bad condition, and these concrete pavers can be used where they are needed.

When questioned, Krishna Reddy, a police constable, claimed that he is attached to the City Armed Reserve (CAR). Krishna Reddy claimed to have permission from the BBMP contractor to take away those concrete pavers. "The contractor told me these concrete pavers, kept on the footpath, have become a hurdle for the pedestrians.

Police constables load pavers into a truck on KG Road

He asked me to transport all the concrete pavers to our office premises at Richmond Circle," Reddy said.

When enquired about the address of the CAR Office at Richmond Circle, the police constable asked the correspondent to accompany him to the CAR office if the latter wanted.

Meanwhile, the CAR Headquarters Control Room stated that the vehicle (KA01 G7235) does not belong to the CAR. They advised the correspondent to contact the Director General of Police Office on Nrupatunga Road. When contacted, Deputy Superintendent of Police Kumar B Gowda said that the vehicle does not belong to the DGP Office.

Some pedestrians noticed police constables loading the police truck with concrete pavers. They said the police department has sufficient funds to develop its office premises in the city. "It is quite disturbing to come across the misuse of police constables and the police truck for transporting concrete pavers without permission. Who will act tough against them for violating norms?" asks Ashok K, an auto rickshaw driver.

> **"Contractor told me these concrete pavers, kept on footpath have become hurdle. He asked me to transport all pavers to our office premises**–Krishna R, constable

There was a scooter, bearing the registration number KA53 EX0292, with a police sticker.

Coming down heavily on the police for lifting concrete pavers without permission, HM Venkatesh, senior activist of Naija Horatagarara Vedike, termed lifting the concrete pavers as a robbery by policemen who are supposed to protect public and private properties. "This incident is a disgrace for the police department. It is quite shocking to see policemen loading their vehicle with concrete pavers during the day without any remorse or regret. The scooter, with a police sticker, has no proper size registration number plate. What right does the police have to inspect public vehicles and advise vehicle owners to fix the right size of registration number plates?" asks Venkatesh.

Will the authorities bother to clear doubts among the public on the concrete pavers issue?

College principal, staff suspended

Principal and staff of Sai Spoorthi Pre-University College in Karnataka's Bidar district were suspended after a probe by the police confirmed that students were not allowed to take the Common Entrance Test (CET) for wearing the sacred thread (janivara/janeu), in violation of rules and guidelines.

Chandrashekhar Biradar, the Principal of Sai Spoorthi Pre-University College in Bidar, and the college's invigilator Satish Pawar have been suspended on the order of the Higher Education Department Secretary, KG Jagadeesha.

The action was taken immediately after Bidar Deputy Commissioner Shilpa Sharma submitted the report.

The Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Child Rights has also registered a suo motu complaint.

Suchivrat Kulkarni, the student who was denied the opportunity to write the CET exam, told the media that he was stopped. He said a staff member made a reckless comment, asking what would happen if someone committed suicide using the sacred thread inside the examination hall.

Trans woman murdered

A 40-year-old transgender woman was found murdered at her residence in Gayathri Layout, KR Puram, on Sunday. The deceased, identified as Tanushree, had married Jagannath three months ago.

Police said Tanushree was found with multiple stab injuries, and her husband is currently missing. Preliminary investigation suggests a possible property dispute as the motive behind the murder, citing ongoing differences between the couple.

Tanushree was associated with an NGO working for transgender welfare, according to sources.

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

Typo trouble

A bureaucratic blooper involving a wrongly written word in a Kannada letter has now spiralled into an official mess, and it's come to light a little late. Turns out, Chintamani Tahsildar Sudarshan put his signature on an official letter that had basic Kannada word mistakes. Now, Chikkaballapura DC PN Ravindra has slapped him with a notice and told him to explain himself within a week. Talk about language lessons coming the hard way! The whole drama started when the Shambook Samarasya Samiti submitted a petition seeking permission to protest in front of the Taluk Office. The Tahsildar responded with a denial — fair enough. But here's the kicker: the letter denying permission had some hilariously botched Kannada words, which didn't go unnoticed. District Coordinator of the Samiti, Suryakiran, wasn't amused. He marched off to the DC's office and filed a formal complaint. Based on that complaint, Ravindra decided it was time to teach a lesson in basic Kannada, officially issuing a notice to the Tahsildar.

'My love is in your hands'

In a quirky turn of events, a student's SSLC exam answer sheet has gone viral for a rather unusual "appeal" – the student attached a 500 note to the sheet with a heartfelt (and cheeky) request. At an answer sheet evaluation center in Belagavi district, one student's answer sheet was found with the note: "If I pass this exam, she promised to love me. So please, kindly pass me. My love is in your hands," followed by a 500 note as a token of 'appreciation.'

Tusker takes the wheel

In a classic only-in-Bengaluru moment, a BMTC bus was stalled for an hour, courtesy of an unexpected VIP: an elephant named Vanaraja. The elephant, a familiar face from the Bannerghatta Safari, decided to take a leisurely break right in the middle of the road near Gullahatti Kaval, Muninagara, halting traffic like he owned it. An Elephant and a herd of eight had wandered off to Milti Gudde lake for a drink, but on the return, he chose to strike a pose in front of the bus, leaving passengers stunned. Luckily, Bannerghatta Forest Officer Shankar D Antaragatti and team swooped in calmly, steering the gentle giant back to the forest without a fuss. "It's not uncommon," said the officer. "Every few months, elephants wander 20–30 km in search of food. They're peaceful, just curious."

Just dosa and discussions

Amid swirling rumours of a war of words in the Cabinet, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah served up clarity—and a crispy masala dosa. After relishing the iconic South Indian delight at a hotel in Bengaluru's Malleswaram, accompanied by Minister Mahadeva and Political Secretary Govindaraju, the CM addressed the buzz around Thursday's special Cabinet meeting on the caste census. Dismissing any claims of raised voices or verbal duels, Siddaramaiah said, "There was an elaborate discussion on the Social and Educational Survey report, but it remained inconclusive and will continue in the next meeting. No one opposed the report, and certainly, no one shouted." Backing him up with his flavour of wit, Deputy CM DK Shivakumar chimed in, "We didn't talk loudly. We didn't talk softly. We just discussed. That's it. Everyone shared their views—no resistance, no decisions beyond that." So, while the dosa was hot, the Cabinet talks were anything but just a mild, well-seasoned political conversation.

PGs in jungle chase

Who knew trekking through dense forests could be such a hot career move? The Forest Department's Chamarajanagar division invited applications for just 83 Beat Forest Guard posts, and a jaw-dropping 27,361 applications poured in — including from postgraduate candidates! These are frontline roles, patrolling thick jungles and occasionally facing wild animals, once considered daunting and dangerous. But times have changed. What was once feared is now fiercely coveted, with even highly qualified youth tossing their hats into the ring. The job required just a PUC qualification, yet it saw grads and postgrads queuing up — a glaring reminder of how deep unemployment runs. Looks like the path to becoming a forest beat guard is no walk in the park — even if it is through one. **–Sridhar Vivan**

BM SIMPLY PUT

Today we look at why Bandipur night traffic ban is back in the news

In the cover of the night

The earth belongs to all living beings, but humans have long drawn boundaries to suit their own needs—building cities, fencing lands, and even encroaching into the remaining forests. Now, a concerning development has reignited debates around Bandipur Tiger Reserve, where the long-standing ban on night traffic is once again under pressure for removal. Why is this issue returning, and who's behind the push?

Ongoing battle over night traffic

The Bandipur Tiger Reserve, located in Chamarajanagar district, lies along two crucial national highways—one connecting Karnataka to Kerala and the other leading towards Tamil Nadu. Since 2009, night traffic between 9 PM and 6 AM has been banned on both these roads to protect wildlife. While Tamil Nadu has never opposed the restriction, Kerala has consistently lobbied for its removal, arguing that it hampers movement, especially during emergencies. The debate has now resurfaced, fueled by political and business interests.

Wildlife versus convenience

Before the ban was enforced, numerous animals were being killed while crossing the highway at night. Wildlife experts and forest officials reported that animal movement peaks after dark. A government-commissioned study supported this, prompting the then Chamarajanagar Deputy Commissioner Manoj Kumar Meena to impose the night traffic ban in June 2009. Despite Kerala's repeated petitions to lift it—including an appeal in the Supreme Court—the Karnataka High Court upheld the ban in 2010, citing environmental concerns.

Political pressures and industrial lobbies

Sources point to a strong timber and cattle transport lobby in Kerala as a key force behind the push to lift the ban. These groups, reportedly with political backing, are using elections as opportunities to reignite the issue. During the last Lok Sabha campaign, Karnataka Deputy CM DK Shivakumar reportedly promised to revisit the ban, triggering criticism from environmentalists. Later, even Wayanad MP Priyanka Gandhi was said to have exerted pressure on Karnataka regarding the same.

Numbers tell the story

The scale of wildlife deaths before the ban was alarming—32 animals were killed in 2004, followed by 7 in 2005, 9 in 2006, 41 in 2007, and 2 in 2008. In total, 91 animals lost their lives in just five years before the restriction was enforced. These figures highlight the importance of preserving nighttime silence in such sensitive ecological zones.

Is there a better way?

Wildlife researcher Sanjay Gubbi has suggested a practical solution—developing State Highway 90 as an alternative route to Kerala. The proposed 9.8-km elevated road, skirting the edge of Nagarahole forest and connecting Allur gate to Thithimathi, could ease traffic without disturbing wildlife. Karnataka has already initiated this plan, and if Kerala follows suit with a similar elevated stretch along its Wayanad route, the dependency on Bandipur's roads can be eliminated.

Why protest?

Interestingly, Tamil Nadu has similar nighttime traffic bans through the Sathyamangalam forest region but has never raised objections. The consistent and forceful lobbying from Kerala has raised suspicions of industrial interests—especially the timber trade—pushing for ease of transport under the guise of public inconvenience. This raises key questions: Is the timber and cattle transport lobby influencing Kerala's stand? Is Kerala succumbing to vested interests? And if Tamil Nadu can accept the ban, why not Kerala?

The verdict is awaited

As the case now rests with the Supreme Court, the spotlight is once again on Bandipur. Environmentalists hope that conservation will triumph over convenience, while Kerala continues its push for removal. For now, the night in Bandipur remains dark—and safe—for its wild inhabitants.

Hoardings crash brings traffic to halt

A BBMP official said, "Though there were no injuries. The cutout damaged a car and severely hampered movement for a while. Traffic police had to intervene promptly to clear the debris and ease the congestion. As supporters flood the constituencies with unauthorised birthday banners and hoardings, citizens are questioning how such blatant violations continue despite BBMP bans and court orders. With the pre-monsoon season in full swing, concerns over public safety are mounting. What was once limited to roadworks, bottlenecks, and rains has now expanded to include falling cutouts as yet another cause of Bengaluru's traffic nightmares." **–BMB**

Tempo collides with parked plane at airport

A tempo traveller collided with a parked IndiGo aircraft, which was undergoing repair work, at Kempegowda International Airport on Friday around 12.15 pm, officials said.

The aircraft, which was parked near Parking Bay 71 Alpha for maintenance due to engine trouble, was struck by the vehicle. The tempo traveller, used to transport crew members, was empty at the time of the incident.

Fortunately, no injuries were reported, and authorities have confirmed that all safety protocols were followed.

"... All necessary protocols have been promptly followed in coordination with relevant stakeholders. The safety and security of our passengers, airline partners, and airport personnel remain our highest priority," a spokesperson for Kempegowda International Airport, said. IndiGo Airlines also stated that all necessary action shall be initiated. **–ANI**

Pedestrians cross the street in the rain at Jayanagar on Sunday

SC mandates written grounds of arrest be handed to accused

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TWEETS @BangaloreMirror

Anyone being arrested must now be given a written explanation of the reasons for their arrest, in a language they understand. This key requirement, reinforced by the Supreme Court and a recent circular issued by the Director General's office, aims to ensure transparency and protect constitutional rights.

The Supreme Court has, in multiple rulings, made it clear that reading out the reasons or simply showing documents is not enough. A copy must be handed over at the time of arrest, stating why the person is being taken into custody and what their alleged role is.

This rule has been strongly reiterated in three landmark judgments which are Pankaj Bansal v. Union of India (2024), Prabir Purkayastha v. State (2024) and Vihaan Kumar v. State of Haryana (2025)

In these cases, the Court warned that failure to provide written grounds of arrest violates constitutional protections under Article 22(1) and renders the arrest and remand illegal, even in serious cases like murder or NDPS offenses. Courts have been instructed to verify during remand hearings whether the accused actually received this information in writing.

Despite these directions, many law enforcement agencies still depend on routine arrest memos or FIR copies, which often lack specific grounds for arrest. This procedural lapse has led to courts releasing accused persons on bail.

In response, the Director General's office has issued a standardised format and updated guidelines for all police departments and enforcement agencies. These now require officers to provide a copy of the FIR, state the specific grounds and reasons for arrest, clearly explain the accused's role in the case and take the accused's signature as acknowledgment

Additionally, these details must be included in the remand application submitted to the magistrate. If the arrest requires prior permission, the officer must also submit documented justification.

The circular also applies to other agencies involved in law enforcement, including tax, revenue, and customs departments, directing them to avoid arbitrary use of arrest powers and follow due process.

Warning: Unauthorised crossings ahead

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

and taking shortcuts. This is also contributing to unsafe crossing of the expressway by pedestrians.

Motorists' dilemma

The expressway is frequented by high-speed vehicles, and when pedestrians suddenly cross the road in such unauthorised areas, it creates a dangerous situation.

For motorists, this means having to quickly control their vehicles to avoid accidents. The risk of accidents and injuries increases as people continue to ignore safety protocols and cross recklessly.

Unauthorised crossings

As days pass, more illegal crossings are being observed on the newly built expressway. Locals are bypassing fences and walking across the road, violating traffic norms. Authorities have warned that this could lead to a rise in accidents if the behaviour continues unchecked.

Safety measures needed

The highway authority has installed fences on both sides of the road to ensure safety. However, the growing number of people cutting through the fences to cross the road is becoming a significant concern. Local authorities must take action against such violations to prevent accidents and ensure safety on the expressway.

Dr. CN Manjunath, Bengaluru Rural MP said, "I have urged the highway authority to take immediate action against those cutting fences and crossing the road illegally. There is a need for stricter enforcement to discourage this dangerous behavior among pedestrians."

Police action

While the police have taken action against vehicles that stop illegally on the expressway, there has been no action yet against pedestrians who cross the road at unauthorised points. The authorities need to address this growing problem to ensure road safety for both pedestrians and vehicle users.

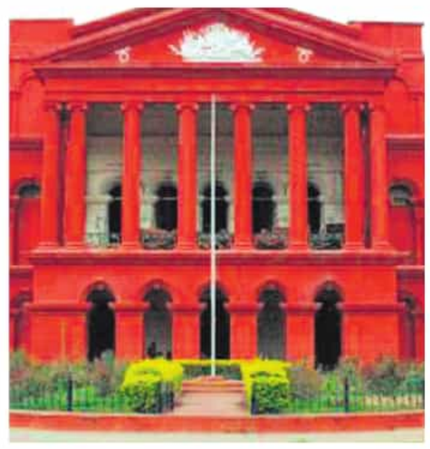
Dangerous crossing points

At certain locations, such as near the Bididi and Bhairappatan stretches, locals and travelers are frequently crossing the road illegally. Many roadside vendors selling food and other items have also contributed to the problem.

Travelers often stop their vehicles to buy goods, and as a result, they walk across the road in unsafe areas, ignoring the designated crossings. "To ensure safety and prevent accidents, authorities need to act swiftly and take strict action against those violating traffic and safety rules on the Bengaluru-Mysuru Expressway," said Chandan Kumar, a regular commuter.

Additional evidence can be allowed only in exceptional cases: HC

The Karnataka High Court has determined that additional evidence under Section 391 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (CrPC) should be permitted only when parties were unable to present evidence during trial despite exercising due diligence, and solely in exceptional circumstances.



Justice M Nagaprasanna stated, "…that power to record additional evidence under Section 391 of the Cr.P.C. should only be exercised when the party making such request was prevented from presenting the said evidence in the trial, despite due diligence. In the case at hand, the petitioner makes an attempt to get those documents, it is rejected, the rejection has become final. The same relief is now sought in the appellate stage."

The Court further noted, "This Court, cannot but infer that it is only a ruse to drag the proceedings further. Though the concerned Court has the power to secure additional evidence under Section 391 of the Cr.P.C., it is as observed by the Apex Court and other Courts, to be exercised in rare and exceptional cases…such rare or exception case is not the one that is projected by the petitioner." The legal representatives were Advocate B. Siddeshwara for the Petitioner and Senior Advocate Sandesh J Couta for the Respondent.

Case background

The Trial Court convicted the Petitioner under Section 138 of the Negotiable Instruments Act, 1881 following dishonoured cheques in a transaction with the Respondent. The Petitioner's application under Section 91 CrPC for document production was rejected by the Trial Court. A subsequent appeal and application under Section 391(1) CrPC seeking identical documents was also dismissed, leading to the High Court petition.

The Petitioner argued that Section 391 CrPC authorised the Appellate Court to allow additional evidence at any stage, claiming the documents were crucial for proving innocence. The Respondent countered that Section 391 CrPC powers were limited to exceptional circumstances.

Court's analysis

The Court emphasised that additional evidence under Section 391 CrPC requires proof that evidence could not be presented during trial despite due diligence.

Citing Ajitsinh Chehuji Rathod v. State of Gujarat (2024), the Court highlighted that such powers apply when evidence was unavailable despite diligence, or when relevant facts emerged during appeal, and justice would be compromised without such evidence. The Court determined that the Petitioner's repeated attempts to obtain previously denied documents at the appellate stage were dilatory tactics. Despite having authority under Section 291 CrPC, the Court found no exceptional circumstances warranting intervention.

The petition was accordingly dismissed for lack of merit. **BMB**

594 cases till Feb 2025

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

and 3,898 in 2023, reaching a new high of 4,019 in 2024. In 2025, as of February, a total of 594 POCSO cases had already been reported.

However, despite the growing number of cases, conviction rates remain worryingly low. Between 2021 and 2024, only 353 convictions were secured out of a total of 13,990 cases registered during the period. The conviction rate in crimes against women—ranging from sexual harassment and rape to dowry-related deaths and POCSO cases—remains alarmingly low, pointing to significant administrative and judicial delays. In 2020, only 3 percent of cases led to convictions (222 cases), and this figure plummeted to just 0.19 percent in 2024. As of 2025, no convictions have been recorded, according to available data.

This dismal trend underscores the mounting backlog in Bengaluru's five special fast-track courts handling POCSO cases. Of the 216 cases charge-sheeted in 2024, only 15 have been disposed of so far, leaving more than 200 cases still pending trial.

Child rights activist Rupa Hassan explains that courts often treat women's rape cases and POCSO cases in a similar manner, despite their distinct nature. She emphasises the urgent need for victim-centric courts, enhanced protection for survivors, and legal professionals specifically trained to handle such sensitive cases. "Moreover, a majority of child abuse cases go unreported due to fear of social stigma, intimidating police interrogation, or the prolonged and exhausting judicial process. Even when someone gathers the courage to act against the perpetrator, indifferent attitudes and flawed police investigations often lead to no meaningful outcome," she said.

Cases disposed of

In 2024, the case disposal rate plummeted to a mere 7 percent — a sharp decline from previous years: 43 percent in 2023 (117 out of 274 charge-sheeted cases), 81 percent in 2022 (307 out of 377), 84 percent in 2021 (195 out of 231), and 82 percent in 2020 (201 out of 243). Court officials have linked this drastic drop to the prolonged vacancy of a presiding judge in one of the state's five fast-track POCSO courts.

The experts BM spoke to stressed on the urgent need for a complete overhaul — faster trials, better-trained officers, child-friendly courtrooms, and survivor-first policies. While the rise in reporting is a sign of awareness, the lack of accountability continues to cast a long, dark shadow over thousands of young lives.

Sharma pointed out that while the POCSO Act is a robust law with stringent provisions to punish offenders, the pace of justice hinges heavily on the commitment of legal professionals. "The law is strong — what's lacking is the will to act swiftly. Why aren't lawyers pursuing these cases with the urgency and seriousness they demand?" he questioned, expressing concern over the apparent lack of momentum in pushing such sensitive cases through the judicial system.

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Apr: 27* May: 4, 4* 11, 11*, 18, 18* 25, 25*

SHIRDI NASIK/PANCH JYOTHIRLINGA* 7* DAYS
Apr: 27, May: 4, 5*, 11, 12* 18, 19*, 25

COASTAL KARNATAKA/COORG*/CHIKMAGALUR* 4/3* DAYS
May: 2*, 4, 9*, 11, 16*, 18, 23*, 25

SOUTH INDIA 11 DAYS EX: HUBLI May: 4, 15, 26

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Stars rising

Talents shaping the future of Bollywood cinema

Fresh southern star

Rashmika Mandanna, a favourite down South, entered Bollywood with confidence. Her relatable charm in Goodbye and Animal is winning over fans and helping regional cinema merge with mainstream appeal.

Model turned muse

Sharvari Wagh debuted with Bunty Aur Babli 2 and quickly earned praise for her screen presence. With promising new projects lined up, she's clearly on track to become a leading star.

Dance to drama

Nora Fatehi started with striking dance numbers but is now exploring deeper acting roles. Her turns in Bhuj and Street Dancer 3D signal a steady shift toward more layered performances.

Breakout film success

Triptii Dimri gained national attention with her gripping performance in Qala and later stole hearts in Animal. Her nuanced roles and quiet strength make her a standout in Bollywood's evolving storytelling space.

From TV triumph

Mrunal Thakur smoothly transitioned from television to films. With memorable roles in Sita Ramam and Jersey, she continues to impress with her range and emotional depth, proving she's here to stay.

– Sonal Khandelwal / ETimes.in

SANDALWOOD SHOTS
Y MAHESWARA REDDY

First song unveiled

The team of bilingual film Bank of Bhagyalakshmi is excited about the release of a song from the film on Wednesday. Bank of Bhagyalakshmi is being made in Kannada and Telugu. Lahari Velu was the chief guest at the function.

Producer HK Prakash, known for successful movies Rangi Taranga and Avane Srimannaarayana, is bankrolling the movie while Abhishek makes debut as an independent director in Sandalwood with it. Prior to this, Abhishek has worked as assistant director for a few Kannada movies under the guidance of director Simple Suni. Playback singer Shilpa has sung the song in Kannada while Mangli has sung the Telugu version of the song.

Brinda Acharya of Prema Poojyam and Kausalya Supraja Rama fame is the heroine. Usha Bhandari and Darshan are the choreographers. Judah Sandhy has scored its music.

"Rakshith Shetty and I manage Pinaka Studios. I have known producer Prakash for quite a long time. He agreed to bankroll the movie after I narrated the script to him. The script is quite different. We have already wrapped up the shooting. We plan to release the movie in June or July," said Abhishek.

Poster controversy ends

Curtains have come down on a controversy over a poster of Kannada movie Spark. The movie's poster, released on the occasion of Nenepirali Prem's birthday, had sparked a controversy with actor Ramesh Indira and heroine-cum-producer Shruthi Naidu threatening to take legal action against the director for printing actor Ramesh Indira's photo without his permission. Niranjan Sudheendra is playing the lead while Nenepirali Prem plays a cameo in Spark.

Ramesh blamed director Handral for using his photo on the poster without his nod. Handral debuts as a director in Sandalwood with Spark. After Handral tendered an apology to Ramesh, the controversy died down. It is said the poster showcased Prem burning the photo of a politician (Ramesh Indira) with a cigar. "I should have used your photo only after getting your permission. I thought our manager had taken your permission. It happened due to miscommunication. I am sorry," the apology letter from Handral read.

Ramesh advised Handral not to repeat such mistakes.

Relationship based on trust, loyalty

Filmmaker Rohit Shetty recently shared a surprising behind-the-scenes story from the sets of his much-awaited film 'Singham Again'. He opened up about the personal bonds he shares with some of Bollywood's biggest stars.

During a chat on the YouTube show Game Changers, Rohit revealed that actress Deepika Padukone was four months pregnant when she came to shoot for the film. Yet, her professionalism didn't falter. "There are 2-3 people (I can call up at 2 am). There's Ajay sir, Ranveer Singh, Deepika. I'm very close to them. When only the last schedule of our film (Singham Again) was pending, Deepika was four months pregnant. But she came for the shoot. Relations like these are rarely made," Rohit said.

'Singham Again' marked Deepika's return to Rohit's universe after her dance cameo with husband Ranveer Singh in the 2022 comedy 'Cirkus'. –ETimes

Unique touch even in ensemble cast

Actor Kunal Kapoor is all set to star in the much-talked-about heist drama, "Jewel Thief: The Heist Begins," starring Saif Ali Khan.

Kunal's filmography boasts films wherein he has been a part of ensemble projects, but he revealed that he never felt overshadowed by starring in multi-starrer films. He shared, "For me, acting has never been a battle of egos. Whether it's a solo film or standing among an ensemble, what truly matters is the lasting impression my character leaves on the audience. I've shared the screen with major stars throughout my career, but never once felt lesser because each performer brings their own personality to the table."

Talking about "Jewel Thief, the actor added, "With 'Jewel Thief,' there were two compelling reasons, the chance to collaborate with talents like Saif Ali Khan, Jaideep, and Siddharth Anand and the fact that every character in this story possesses a distinct voice and space in the story..." –IANS

Jennifer's fear of flying

Actor Jennifer Aniston recently revealed that she has an extreme fear of flying, but has found ways to manage her anxiety!

According to E! News, in a recent interview, the 56-year-old actress, known for her roles in 'Friends' and 'We're the Millers', shared that she has been using hypnosis and meditation to combat her nerves.

Aniston explained that she has been doing hypnosis to help her overcome her fear of flying. As part of the hypnosis process, she was required to remove her superstitions, which included tapping the outside of the plane with her right palm and stepping onto the plane with her right foot.

"But I have been doing some hypnosis lately, and one of the requirements is to remove all of those superstitions," she said, adding, "I have not been doing the right hand, right foot--and now it's shockingly good!" as quoted by E! News. –ANI

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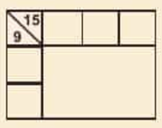
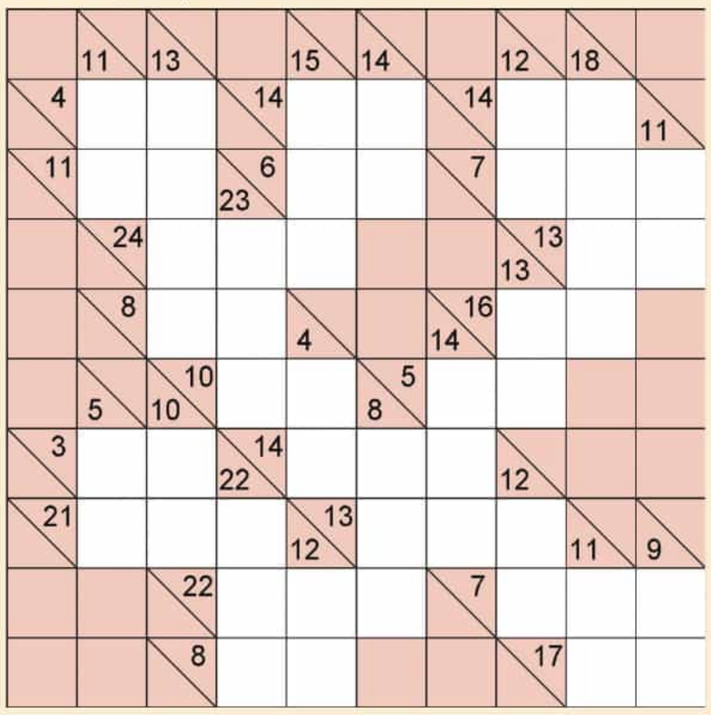
Kakuro

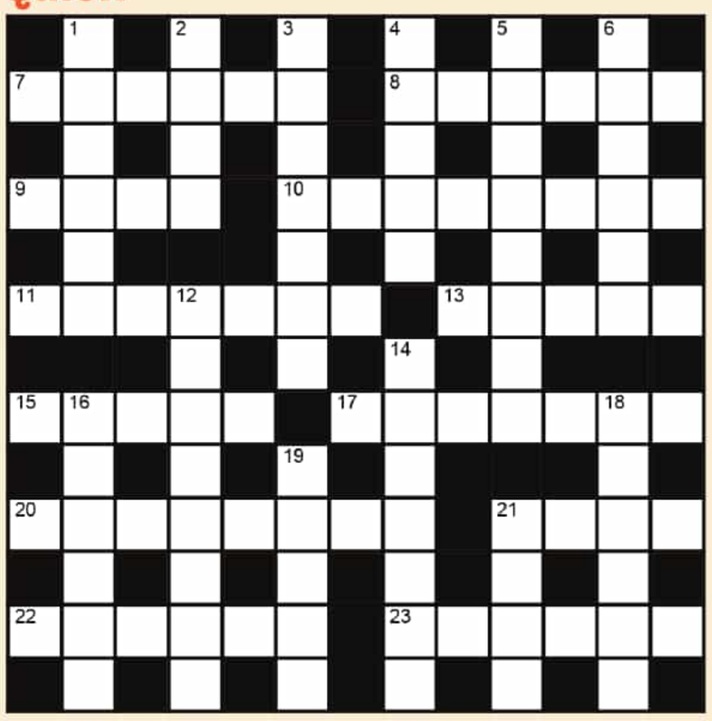
The numbers in the grey squares refer to the sums of the digits that you must fill into the empty spaces directly below or to the right of the grey square containing the number. For instance, in the given example, the 3 boxes horizontally next to 15 must contain 3 digits that add up to 15, whereas for 9, it is the 2 boxes placed vertically under it that must add up to 9. No zeros are used here, only the digits 1 through 9.



Note: A digit cannot appear more than once in any particular digit combination. For instance, in the example, we cannot have the combination of 4+7+4 for 15.



Quick



ACROSS

7 Nevertheless (4,2)
8 Warm, hooded waterproof jacket (6)
9 Tall plant (4)
10 Conspires for illegal gains (8)
11 Moisten (7)
13 Booth; stand (5)
15 Managed but not very successfully? (3,2)
17 Abducts and holds to ransom (7)
20 Like a tramp or vagrant (8)
21 Her basilica is located in Shivajinagar (4)
22 Slave to a narcotic (6)
23 Industrialist ___ Ambani (6)

DOWN

1 Excessively (6)
2 This one's __ __ : I'll pay the bill? (2,2)
3 Blackball, rebuff or ostracise (7)
4 Stalks or follows (5)
5 Answer (8)
6 ____ dozen : that's thirteen actually? (6)
12 Emphasised, repeated embarrassing facts, etc. (6,2)
14 Lithe (7)
16 Egg-shaped bodies (6)
18 Mr. Rawal of Bollywood (6)
19 A small pier (5)
21 Petname for Michael (4)

Quoteuncode

This puzzle is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that Q equals C, it will equal C throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

Today's CLUE: T EQUALS D

DY AVZ IRDL YVM LVKVMMVI, LVKVMMVI UVKSJ. DY AVZ TVC'L IRDL YVM LVKVMMVI, LVKVMMVI UVKSJ.

Linemaro

Hi, do you have a few minutes for me to hit on you?

Mindchow

The true sign of intelligence is not knowledge but imagination

Joke of the day

When I turned two I was really anxious, because I'd doubled my age in a year, and I thought, if this keeps up, by the time I'm six I'll be ninety.

Loop

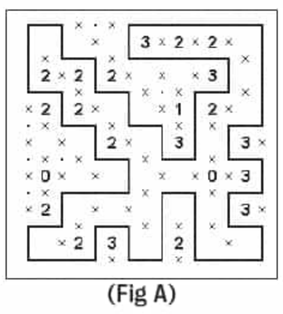
Rules

» Connect adjacent dots with vertical or horizontal lines, creating a single loop (Fig A). » Crossovers or branches are not allowed (As shown by dotted lines in Fig B). » Numbers in the puzzle indicate the number of lines that should surround it, while empty cells may be surrounded by any number of lines. » You can't draw lines around zeros. » Each puzzle has just one unique solution.

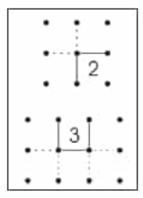
How to begin:

Example (Fig A) – Begin with the zero next to 3. Since no lines can be drawn around zero, mark crosses around it, as shown. Now there is a cross in one space around 3. So we know the three lines of 3 can only be drawn in the remaining three spaces. Next, these lines can only be extended in one direction each. Continue, using the same logic.

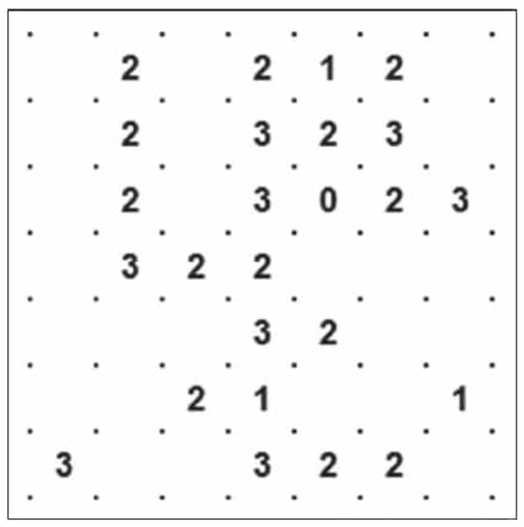
Hints: Keep eliminating possibilities by marking crosses in spaces between dots where a line isn't possible, i.e., if you have already completed required lines or where a line extension may create a branch or cause a dead-end (Fig B)



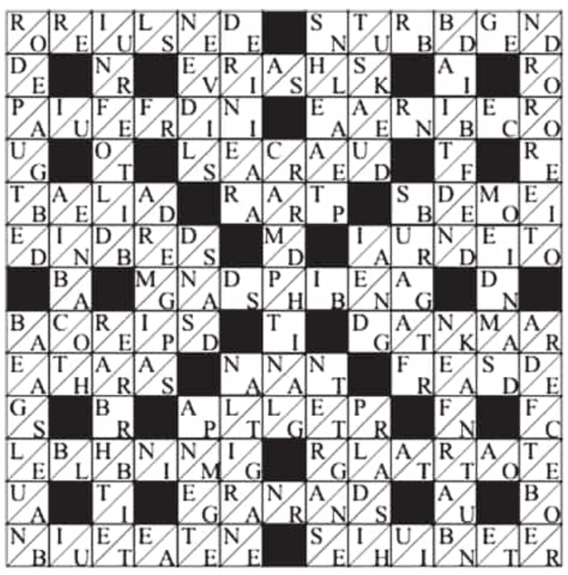
(Fig A)



(Fig B) Not Allowed



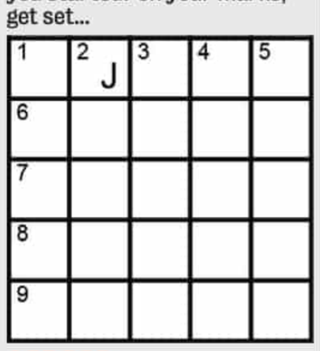
Strikeout



This crossword has no clues and the answer is there waiting for you. All you have to do is find it in each square. You have a choice of two letters, one of which you must strike out. If you choose correctly, you will be left with a grid that contains real words.

Fast five

How long do you think it will take you to unscramble the ten words shown below and fit them correctly into the grid in the order given one letter has already been entered to get you started? on your marks, get set...



ACROSS

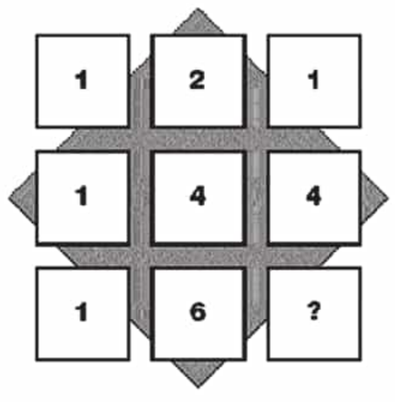
1 For JD; 6 Lurer; 7 Aries; 8 So van; 9 Screw

DOWN

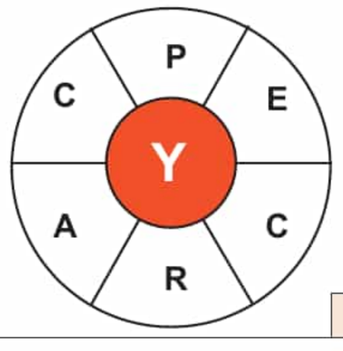
1 FN car; 2 Jo Rur; 3 Voile; 4 Wears; 5 S Reds

Mensapuzzle

What is missing from the last square?



Bull's eye



How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown? Every word must contain the central letter. There should be one seven-letter word. British English Dictionary is used as a reference.

06 Average; 07 Good; 09 Outstanding

SudokuChallenge

7			6		5			4
	3	9				1	6	
2								9
	4		9	8	3		5	
				1				
	5		7	2	6		1	
6								1
	1	8				9	2	
5			1		8			3

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from one to nine must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Gofigure

Place the four numbers in the first, third, fifth, and seventh boxes and whatever operators you care to use in the second, fourth, and sixth boxes in the correct order to get the answer. Use the numbers only once.

Easy = 10

2 4 5 9

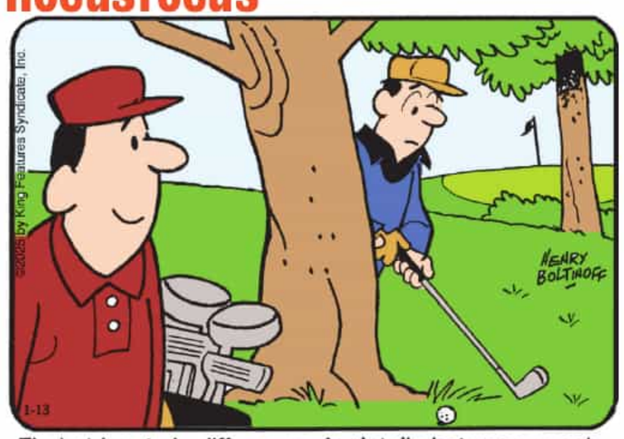
Medium = 49

4 5 8 9

Hard = 2

2 4 5 9

Hocusfocus



Find at least six differences in details between panels.

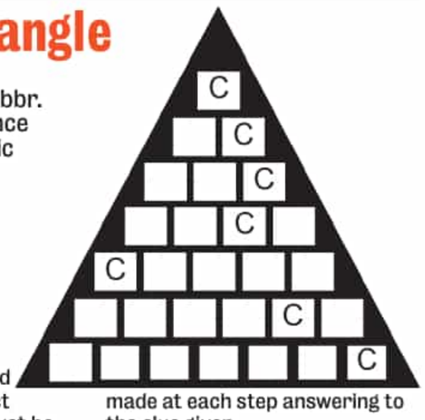
Differences: 1. Club is shorter. 2. Thumb is moved. 3. Collar is different. 4. Nose is different. 5. Leaves are added. 6. Bush is added.

Riddler

What does this represent? | R | E | A | D | I | N | G |

Alpha triangle

1 Third letter
2 Air conditioner, abbr.
3 Resinous substance
4 Ornamental fabric
5 Unsoiled
6 Quick look
7 Seraphic

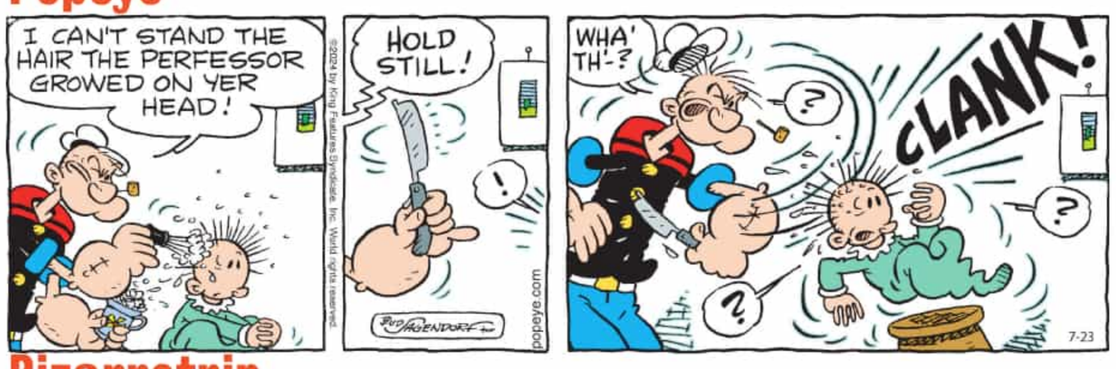


Beginning at the top move towards the bottom seven-letter word by adding a letter at each step and rearranging. A correct and different word must be made at each step answering to the clue given.

DIFFICULT TO SOLVE? FIND THESE SOLUTIONS ON THE NEXT PAGE »

COMICS

Popeye



Bizarrotrip

Diamond Lil

Hart of the city

Crankshaft

Mutts

WHAT YOUR STARS SAY TODAY

Aries Mar 21 – Apr 20
Today brings happiness and potential gains—previous losses may turn into profits. Your superiors may appreciate your efforts, and changes in your role, responsibilities, or even a promotion could be on the horizon. Hidden enemies or rivals are under control. Singles and couples may make important marriage-related decisions with support from loved ones.

Taurus Apr 21 – May 20
You are blessed by the Moon today, bringing joy and relief from last week's pressures. Hard work begins to pay off, and with your team's support, delayed tasks can move forward. Business gains are likely, boosting your financial stability.

Gemini May 21 – Jun 21
You might feel low today, with health concerns affecting your mood. It's a day to postpone investments or launching new ventures, as potential losses may outweigh gains. Practice caution in financial matters.

Cancer Jun 22 – July 23
New business orders may arrive, promising future profits. Your innovative ideas can bring progress at work, and new partnerships may form. However, the busy schedule might cause mental fatigue and affect your home life. Balance is key.

Leo Jul 24 – Aug 23
Your work performance shines today. With supportive colleagues, you're likely to complete postponed tasks successfully. Financial investments are favoured, and job seekers may find new opportunities. Those with lingering health concerns may receive positive updates.

Virgo Aug 24 – Sep 23
The atmosphere around you is improving. While challenges remain, you're encouraged not to carry life's burdens alone. Difficulties in easy gains may persist, but blessings from elders can help you navigate. Clarity around your goals is finally emerging.

Libra Sep 24 – Oct 22
Today may bring incomplete tasks and emotional ups and downs. Your patience may be tested, and confusion from small mistakes can cloud your judgment. Lovebirds may feel uncertain about their emotions, and high expectations could strain relationships. Care for your parents and focus on improving concentration.

Scorpio Oct 23 – Nov 22
A cheerful day awaits. You'll maintain a healthy balance between earnings and expenses, strengthening your finances. Your network can help implement plans effectively. Siblings and subordinates will be supportive. Consider visiting elders or a religious place for peace.

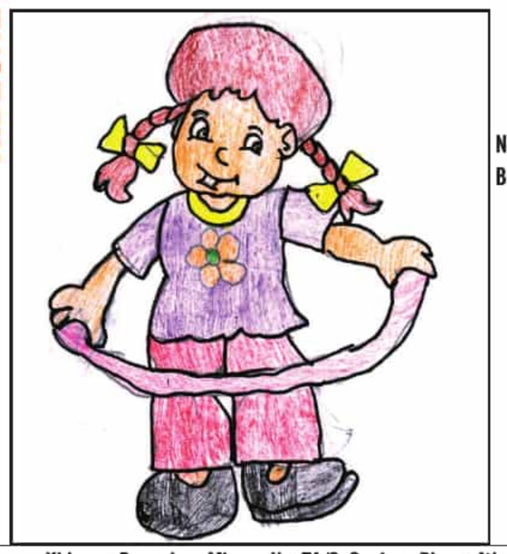
Sagittarius Nov 23 – Dec 22
Your energy and enthusiasm are high today, driving you toward your goals with optimism. You may plan fun outings with friends or family. Students can expect positive developments in their studies.

Capricorn Dec 23 – Jan 20
The morning may feel heavy, with nervousness or unease. But by afternoon, your energy improves, and your self-confidence gets a boost. Be cautious in decisions involving finances, work, or studies. Relationship-wise, practice patience with your spouse to maintain harmony. Lovebirds might plan a short trip together.

Aquarius Jan 21 – Feb 19
Watch your spending habits today, as overspending can affect your savings. Be mindful in communication, both at home and at work. Avoid lending money or making big decisions around property or investments. Focus on fulfilling your responsibilities rather than avoiding them.

Pisces Feb 20 – Mar 20
Today brings peace of mind. You may consider investing in your business, improving liquidity and financial health. Romantic moments with your spouse will enhance family harmony. Singles may find a suitable match, and couples might decide to tie the knot. Students are blessed by their good karma.

KIDZONE



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SOLUTIONS

SOLVE IN 1M
= 4!/(4^2) =
((4×3×2×1/8)!)!²
= (3!)² = (3×2×1)²
= (6)² = 36

BULL'S EYE
apery, payer, PECCARY, pray, prey, pyre, racy, repay, year

FAST FIVE

C	R	E	W	S
N	O	V	A	S
A	R	I	S	E
R	U	L	E	R
F	J	O	R	D

QUOTE UNCODE
If you wait for tomorrow, tomorrow comes. If you don't wait for tomorrow, tomorrow comes.

STRIKE OUT

R	E	U	S	E	D	■	S	U	B	B	E	D	■	■
E	■	N	■	V	I	A	L	S	■	A	■	O	■	■
P	U	F	F	I	■	N	■	E	E	R	I	E	R	■
U	■	O	■	L	A	C	E	D	■	T	■	R	■	■
T	E	L	A	■	R	A	P	■	S	E	M	I	■	■
■	A	■	G	A	S	P	I	N	G	■	A	U	D	I	T
E	N	D	E	D	■	M	■	A	■	U	D	I	T	■
A	C	R	I	D	■	I	■	D	A	K	A	R	■	■
E	T	A	S	■	A	N	T	■	R	A	S	E	■	■
G	■	B	■	A	L	G	E	R	■	F	■	C	■	■
E	B	B	I	N	G	■	R	A	T	■	T	A	T	■
A	■	I	■	E	A	R	N	S	■	A	■	O	■	■
F	A	■	E	■	I	■	S	■	E	■	■	■	■	■

QUICK

■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
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■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

MENSA PUZZLE
Reading between the lines

RIDDLER
9. Working in rows, top to bottom, reading each row as a 3 digit number, rows follow the sequence of Square Numbers from 11 to 13.

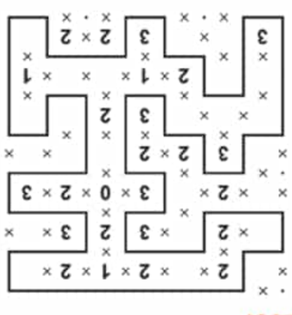
SUDOKU

5	9	2	1	6	8	7	4	3
3	1	8	4	5	7	9	2	6
6	7	4	2	3	9	5	8	1
9	5	3	7	2	6	4	1	8
8	2	6	5	1	4	3	9	7
1	4	7	9	8	3	6	5	2
2	6	5	3	4	1	8	7	9
4	3	9	8	7	2	1	6	5
7	8	1	6	9	5	2	3	4

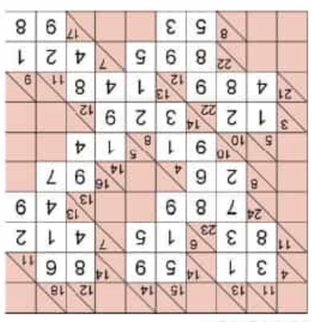
ALPHA TRIANGLE
C, AC, LAC, Lace, Clean, Glance, Angelic.

GO FIGURE
Easy
2 + 4 + 9 − 5 = 10
Medium
9 x 4 + 8 + 5 = 49
Hard
9 − 4 / 5 x 2 = 2

LOOP



KAKURO



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Sonakshi Sinha's 'Nikita Roy' to release on May 30
Mhe psychological thriller that explores themes of mysticism, psychological tension, and human vulnerability, is directed by Sonakshi's brother, Kussh S Sinha

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AAMIR KHAN'S 'SITAARE ZAMEEN PAR' TO RELEASE ON JUNE 20; THEATRICAL TRAILER TO DEBUT WITH 'RAID 2'

Following a break from acting, superstar Aamir Khan is gearing up to return to the big screen with 'Sitaare Zameen Par'. After weeks of speculation surrounding the release date of this heartfelt sports drama-comedy, the film directed by RS Prasanna will premiere on June 20.

According to Pinkvilla, Aamir has decided to release 'Sitaare Zameen Par' on June 20 to benefit from an open slot at the box office. While initially May 30 was considered, the later date provides a two-week window without competition, giving the film a better chance to perform well. The source told the news portal that the editing of 'Sitaare Zameen Par' is complete, and Aamir is now concentrating on promoting the film to reach his audience in the most effective manner. Khan has great confidence in the film's content, which follows his trademark mix of humour, emotion and drama. After searching for the perfect release window, he has chosen June 20. The marketing strategy has been finalised.

The makers plan to release the theatrical trailer within the next two weeks and intend to attach it to the prints of 'Raid 2', which will release on May 1.

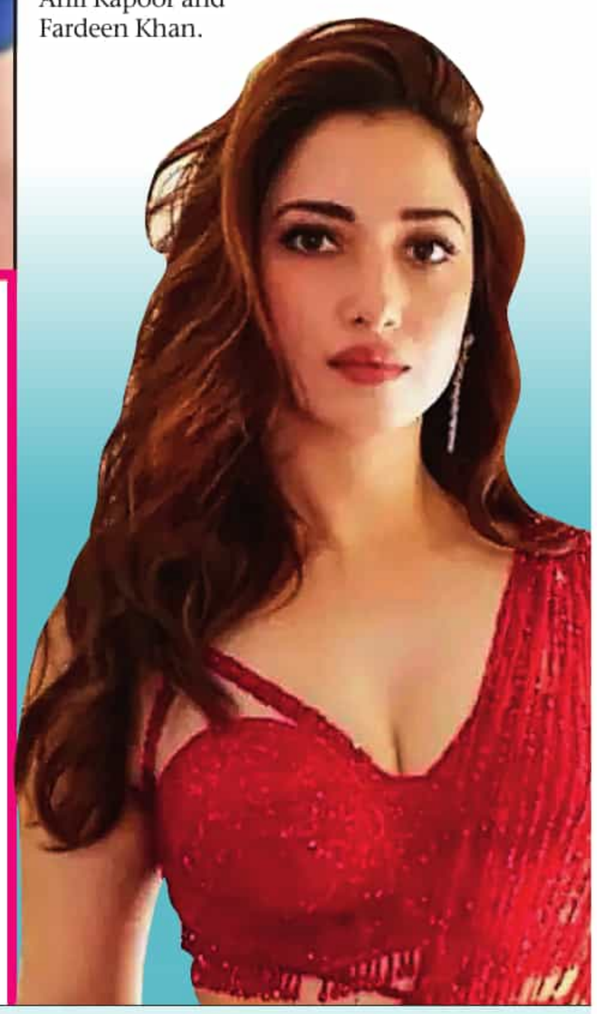
Aamir is currently in discussions for several other projects, including a comedy with Rajkumar Santoshi and a superhero film with Lokesh Kanagaraj. He is expected to finalise his next film after the RS Prassana directorial within the next month.

Tamannaah Bhatia joins Varun Dhawan, Arjun Kapoor and Diljit Dosanjh in 'No Entry 2'

The popular comedy film 'No Entry' is finally getting a sequel after 20 years. 'No Entry 2' has been discussed for years, and now it looks like the project is moving forward, with big names joining the cast and filming plans set in motion.

A report by Peeping Moon said Tamannaah Bhatia has been signed as one of the leading ladies in 'No Entry 2'. This marks her return to the comedy genre, and she is said to be quite excited about it. Tamannaah's character will be somewhat similar to the one played by Bipasha Basu in the original 2005 hit. This comes on the heels of her latest signing — she recently started shooting for 'Ranger' opposite Ajay Devgn. The makers are also said to be in talks with Aditi Rao Hydari for another important female lead role. However, nothing has been confirmed yet.

'No Entry 2' will feature Varun Dhawan, Arjun Kapoor and Diljit Dosanjh as the male leads. This trio is already generating excitement, as each of them is known for his comic timing and screen presence. However, fans of the original might be a little disappointed as the 2005 film had big names like Salman Khan, Anil Kapoor and Fardeen Khan.



SHOOTING FOR HARSHVARDHAN RANE, SONAM BAJWA'S 'DEEWANIYAT' BEGINS

The shooting of 'Deewaniyat' featuring Harshvardhan Rane and Sonam Bajwa began in Mumbai on Thursday. Harshvardhan said, "There's something very grounded and sincere about this film. It's a pleasure to be working with Sonam, and Milap Zaveri has crafted a story that hits you emotionally."

The mahurat ceremony for the film produced by debutant Anshul Garg took place on April 18. Harshvardhan added, "Anshul's vision for it has been clear from the start. He knows exactly what kind of film he wants to make, and that focus is inspiring."

Touted as a music-driven love story, 'Deewaniyat' brings together a fresh cast and a creative team that combines new energy with seasoned experience. Director Milap Zaveri said, "This is a film about love in its most intense and honest form. Harsh and Sonam complement each other beautifully on screen. Anshul, even as a first-time producer, brings a deep understanding of music and emotion, which is central to the way we're telling this story."

For Anshul this marks his entry into full-length cinema. "I have always believed in stories that connect emotionally, and Deewaniyat felt like the right project to begin this journey. It's a film where music plays a central narrative role, the kind of story where songs don't just support the plot, they carry it forward. Milap's storytelling, Harsh and Sonam's performances, there's a lot of heart in this team."

Meghna Gulzar, Junglee Pictures reunite for their next — 'Daayra'

Known for delivering powerful films such as 'Raazi' and 'Talvar', together, Junglee Pictures reunites with director Meghna Gulzar for the third time for 'Daayra'. This gripping crime-drama starring Kareena Kapoor Khan and Prithviraj Sukumaran explores the theme of crime, punishment and justice.

Kareena said, "As I celebrate 25 incredible years in Hindi cinema, I'm thrilled to announce my next film, 'Daayra', with the incredible Meghna Gulzar in the director's chair. I've long admired her work, from 'Talvar' to 'Raazi', and to be directed by her is a dream come true. The opportunity to collaborate with the talented Prithviraj is also a highlight, and I'm drawn to the film's bold, thought-provoking narrative. 'Daayra' promises to be a cinematic experience that challenges and inspires, and I look forward to working with the team at Junglee Pictures on this powerful, timely film."

Fresh off the success of his Malayalam blockbuster L2: Empuraan, Prithviraj takes up this next Hindi film. He said, "When the script was narrated to me, I knew I had to do this. I was absorbed by my character and what he brings to the table as the story progresses. It is layered and will definitely connect with the masses. Working with Meghna, Junglee Pictures and Kareena will be a great experience."

Meghna said, "The story compels you to reflect on the society we live in and its institutions that pilot us. With co-writers Sima and Yash, unravelling the greys within the black and white was challenging and exciting. And Kareena and Prithviraj elevate the narrative further. It is gratifying to collaborate with Junglee Pictures, known for backing stories that are compelling and demand telling."

A spokesperson of Junglee Pictures said, "We are proud to be making 'Daayra'. Meghna's knack for blending entertainment with substance make her ideal to bring this vision to life. We are fortunate to have a dream casting with Kareena and Prithviraj."

The film is currently in pre-production. 'Daayra' is Meghna's next directorial after 'Sam Bahadur' (2023).